

**CITY OF BELLEVUE
ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST
(Integrated SEPA/GMA Process)**

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

PROPOSAL TITLE: Downtown Livability Land Use Code Amendment

PROPERTY OWNERS' NAME: N/A; applies Subarea-wide

PROPOSAL LOCATION: Applies to all property designated Downtown (DNTN-01, DNTN-02, DNTN-MU, DNTN-R, DNTN-OB, and DNTN-OLB)

PROPOSER'S NAME: City of Bellevue, Planning and Community Development Department (PCD)

CONTACT PERSON'S NAME: Patti Wilma, PCD Planning Manager

CONTACT PERSON'S ADDRESS: Planning and Community Development Department
City of Bellevue
P.O. Box 90012
Bellevue, WA 98009-9012

CONTACT PERSON'S PHONE: 425-452-4114

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL'S SCOPE AND NATURE:

1. **General description:** This proposal is to amend Land Use Code related to these Downtown elements:
 - The amenity incentive system
 - Building Form and Height
 - Design Guidelines
 - The Pedestrian Corridor
 - Parking
 - Light Rail Interface
 - Permitted uses including vendor carts
 - Mechanical Screening
 - Maintenance Standards of vacant buildings and sites
 - Recycling and solid waste criteria
 - Elements recommended through the Downtown Transportation Plan Update
 - *Downtown Signage*
2. **Site acreage:** Applies to all property within the Downtown in the City.
See Attachment 1
3. **Number of dwelling units/buildings to be demolished:** N/A

4. **Number of dwelling units/buildings to be constructed:** N/A
5. **Square footage of buildings to be demolished:** N/A
6. **Square footage of buildings to be constructed:** N/A
7. **Quantity of earth movement (in cubic yards):** N/A
8. **Proposed land use:** This Code update will address uses typical in an urban center: office, commercial, residential, recreational, and civic activities/functions.
9. **Design features, including building height, number of stories and proposed exterior materials:** N/A
10. **Other:** N/A

Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

A public hearing on the proposal is anticipated in the fourth quarter of 2013. City Council final action on the proposal will follow that public hearing.

Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

No.

List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

1988 Convention Center IES: 88-3453-LE
1997 Lincoln Square EIS: 97-8314-LE
1998 Meydenbauer Place Convention Center Expansion: 98-1564-LE
1998 Bellevue Super Block (Wasatch): 98-3744-LE
2000 DIP EIS: - 00-239368-LE
2003 The Bravern: 03-114595-LE
2004 Overlake Hospital Master Plan EIS: 04-112140-LE
2005 BelRed Corridor Programmatic EIS – 05-127994-LE
2008 Transportation Facilities Plan Update EIS 2009-2020: 08-132179-LE
2012 Transportation Facilities Plan Update EIS 2013-2024: 12-127104-LE

Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain. List dates applied for and file numbers, if known.

Applications currently in review include:

12-117760-LD – Alamo Manhattan Main Street. Applied for 7/13/12

12-127765-LD – 23 story office building 10833 NE 8th St. Applied for 10/31/12

List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known. If permits have been applied for, list application date and file numbers, if known.

Ordinance adoption by the City Council.

B. Environmental Elements

No discussion of the individual Environmental Elements is required for GMA actions per WAC 197-11-235.3.b.

C. SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS (do not use this sheet for project actions)

SUMMARY

Project Summary:

A key conclusion from the Downtown Implementation Plan (DIP) was that Downtown Bellevue's future competitive edge will depend on creating a livable, memorable Downtown environment. Toward this end, the proposed Downtown Livability work program would examine building heights and urban form, refine urban design guidelines with a stronger focus on the pedestrian and street environment, and promote other amenities that will serve the people who will live and work in Downtown Bellevue in 2030.

The need for the Downtown Livability work has been reviewed with Council on previous occasions during the past few years. The key question stemming from those discussions has not been if the work should be accomplished, but rather when it would be most appropriate to initiate. The Downtown Implementation Plan and subsequent work identified a series of concepts to advance this agenda, but progress has been piecemeal, limited by other City priorities and the need to establish the Downtown light rail alignment.

The Downtown Subarea Plan identifies a number of urban design concepts that have not yet been integrated into the Land Use Code. The differentiation of unique Downtown neighborhoods, "signature streets" on Bellevue Way, 106th and 108th; additional pedestrian features, and integration of Great Streets with building frontages are among these ideas.

Key portions of the Downtown Land Use Code are in need of updating. Perhaps most notably, the Downtown zoning incentive system has never been comprehensively re-visited since its original adoption in 1981. Both the amenities it includes and the bonus rates provided are in critical need of updating, to ensure that the zoning incentive system remains an effective tool for private development to help achieve the Downtown vision. A related issue is building height, with the goal that the Code encourages interesting building forms and differentiation, rather than a bulky, uniform result. In addition, the Land Use Code's parking standards have not kept pace with changes in travel mode split, and Pedestrian Corridor design guidelines are in need of updating.

Achieving Downtown's urban development vision requires active engagement by both public and private sectors. Overall the private sector has been very supportive in partnering with the City to create urban amenities and advance the Downtown Plan. However, there is a sense that the current Code and incentive system should be improved to better reflect market realities and provide greater flexibility in implementing desired amenities. In refining the Code and incentive system, this market perspective will be an important dimension. We want to ensure that the recommended package of amendments is economically feasible for development to implement, and that it will result in development being able and willing to "move the bar" to new levels of quality and livability.

Project Objectives

The proposed work program has the following objectives:

- Refine the Land Use Code to better achieve the Downtown vision while being sensitive to development economics.
- Improve Downtown's pedestrian environment.
- Improve the livability of Downtown as a residential location.
- Enhance the unique identities and characters of Downtown's distinct neighborhoods.
- Integrate this effort with the East Link Collaborative Design process specific to Downtown Bellevue.
- Integrate the Downtown Livability Work Program with the Downtown Transportation Plan effort currently underway.

Scope/Significant Topical Areas

Following are the significant topical areas proposed for the Downtown Livability work program. If this initiative is approved, staff will conduct an early public scoping process before the list is made final.

1. Amenity Incentive System

- Update the amenity incentive system; fine-tune amenities to best support the Downtown vision.

A foundation for development in Downtown Bellevue is a combination of an amenity incentive system and design standards through which floor area (FAR) and building height are earned by providing features with special public benefit. The existing Code framework dates back to 1981; neither the specific bonus features nor bonus rates have been fundamentally updated in a

quarter century to respond to changes in the Downtown environment. This work will refine the incentive system to promote downtown livability and memorability, update to today's market, and ensure the system provides adequate flexibility to achieve the desired outcomes.

Outcome: Revised incentive system that results in better urban form, updated set of bonus amenities, and updated economic foundation.

2. Building Form and Height

- Analyze building form and height; identify potential areas for increased height limits, in return for additional public benefit.

Allowing additional height in some areas could produce more interesting building and roof forms, as well as new opportunities for generating additional or more meaningful public amenities through the incentive system. Related issues include whether the Code should continue to provide for differential height allowances between residential and nonresidential uses in most Downtown districts, and whether the Code should allow transfer of FAR across Downtown districts.

The vision and development regulations for the area currently identified as DT-OLB (Downtown-Office and Limited Business) between 112th and I-405 will also be considered.

Outcome: Possible refinements may allow limited increase to building heights, potentially to include adjustments to FAR transferability opportunities; while generating additional public amenities through the incentive system.

3. Design Guidelines

- Refine Downtown design guidelines to achieve an improved pedestrian environment and a downtown with stronger architectural interest and sustainable building practices.

The City currently has Design Guidelines in place that address building/sidewalk relationships, Downtown in general, Perimeter Design Districts (on the edges of Downtown), Old Bellevue, the Core, and the Civic Center District. There have been varying levels of success in the design outcomes achieved by built projects. These guidelines need updating to promote excellence in urban design and make Downtown an increasingly diverse, livable, and memorable place.

Outcome: Revised guidelines incorporating the Great Streets work, refinements to form, district character, open space, pedestrian orientation and other key design considerations. Ensure that the design review process continues to be customer-focused, fair, predictable, and measurable.

4. Pedestrian Corridor

- Update the Pedestrian Corridor vision/guidelines to create a more vibrant, livable and memorable experience.

The NE 6th Street Pedestrian Corridor was designated in 1981 as a major unifying feature through Downtown. It is to be a safe, lively, high quality, and diverse focal point for the downtown area. Today the Pedestrian Corridor has become a key urban design feature for Downtown, but there is a sense that it is far from achieving its full potential. The Council has previously identified re-visiting the Pedestrian Corridor design framework and implementation as a priority.

Outcome: Revised Pedestrian Corridor vision and guidelines incorporating a more livable and robust vision for the Corridor.

5. Light Rail Interface

- Downtown Station Area Planning; achieve maximum “connectivity” to attract ridership and encourage an active street environment.

The City is currently in the early stages of a Collaborative Design Process for the East Link system within Bellevue. There will be opportunities for Downtown planning work to inform this process to ensure that trade-offs are adequately addressed for consistency with the Downtown vision. Existing Comprehensive Plan policies and the Light Rail Best Practices Report provide general guidance on integrating light rail into an urban downtown, but much more work is needed to translate these policies into specific urban design outcomes. Key issues include refinements to the Code and design guidelines to create an attractive, vital environment immediately surrounding the Downtown light rail station, and achieving maximum “connectivity” to the station to attract ridership and encourage a more active street environment.

Outcome: Inform the ongoing Collaborative Design Process for the Downtown segment; Land Use Code refinements that incorporate Light Rail Best Practices and Station Area Planning.

6. Downtown Parking

- Examine downtown parking standards; respond to shifts in demand, promote multi-modal mobility and economic vitality.

With the continuing shift of Downtown to a more multi-modal urban center, a number of parking components are in need of review. These include minimum parking ratios, parking dimensional standards, treatment of surface parking, garage design, and parking uses (shared, short term, long term).

Outcome: Revised parking ratios and design standards to meet future needs, considering Downtown Transportation Plan work and East Link Light Rail.

7. Other Land Use Code Amendments

Other general and Downtown Land Use Code amendments may be incorporated into this work program. These include a number of needed refinements that have been collected over recent years, along with minor “clean-up” amendments. A tentative list includes the following:

- Maintenance standards for vacant sites and buildings
- Mechanical screening
- Recycling and solid waste criteria
- Signage (not part of the Land Use Code)
- Vendor carts
- Permitted Uses

Outcome: Code refinements to update and address missing or outdated elements.

Environmental Summary per WAC 197-11-235(3)(b):

State the proposal's objectives: To comply with the requirements of the GMA by adopting development regulations that implement and are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Specify the purpose and need to which the proposal is responding:

A key conclusion from the Downtown Implementation Plan (DIP) was that Downtown Bellevue's future competitive edge will depend on creating a livable, memorable Downtown environment. Toward this end, the proposed Downtown Livability work program would examine building heights and urban form, refine urban design guidelines with a stronger focus on the pedestrian and street environment, and promote other amenities that will serve the people who will live and work in Downtown Bellevue in 2030.

State the major conclusions, significant areas of controversy and uncertainty: Development regulations that are consistent with implement the Comprehensive Plan are required under the GMA. Little controversy exists related to this proposal. The Planning Commission may recommend limits on the proposal.

State the issues to be resolved, including the environmental choices to be made among alternative courses of action:

A no action alternative would result in the Downtown's urban development vision stated in the Comprehensive Plan not being realized. The result would be that Downtown Bellevue is not prepared to serve the people who will live and work in Downtown Bellevue in 2030.

State the impacts of the proposal, including any significant adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated: The proposal is a non-project action to amend elements of the Land Use code applicable in the Downtown as identified above. There are no significant adverse impacts anticipated from that action. Impacts from previous environmental Any specific proposal to construct new development with the regulations would require project level review. Adoption of the proposed regulations will ensure that the City is in compliance with GMA requirements for consistency.

Describe any proposed mitigation measures and their effectiveness: No specific development is being approved with this proposal. No significant environmental impacts have been identified, therefore no mitigation measures are proposed. Future development under the provisions of the regulation will be subject to SEPA review, as well as to the City's existing development regulations.

- 1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?**

The proposed code amendment will not increase the potential impacts to water, air and earth resources or noise production.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are: N/A

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish or marine life?

The proposed code amendment will not increase the potential impacts to plants and animals.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish or marine life are: N/A

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

No adverse impacts to energy or natural resources are anticipated.

Proposed measures to project or conserve energy and natural resources are: N/A

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

The proposal will not affect any environmentally sensitive areas. Per LUC 20.25H.005 the Critical Area Overlay District does not apply to the Downtown.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are: N/A

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

The proposal will not affect any shoreline areas. Per LUC 20.25H.005 the Critical Area Overlay District does not apply to the Downtown.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are: N/A

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

Impacts to the transportation system will be addressed in the bi-annual Transportation Facilities Plan Updates and EIS.

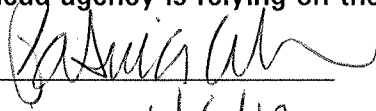
Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are: N/A

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

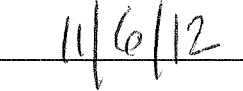
No conflicts are known or anticipated.

- D. The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "G. Smith", written over a horizontal line.

Date Submitted

A handwritten date "11/6/12" in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Downtown Zoning

